

## **There is disquiet in the village. Gnosall is beset by intrigue and tension worthy of an Agatha Christie novel.**

There are plans afoot. I will start again... There are no plans afoot for the village so several parties both within the village and others have grabbed an opportunity to make some money at the expense of the rest of us.

We are talking about the plethora of planning submissions put forward recently by people who should know better and put residents into a furore of counter argument and panic, who again should know better.

Let us go to the nub of the situation. We like our village; we like our village the size it is, even though for most of us, but for its expansion in previous years, would not be able to live here. Nevertheless, we still do not want it to grow any larger. Why?

Whatever the reasons everyone has put forward as an objection to the 'planned' expansion; not enough drainage, not enough road width, not enough power, not enough facilities, not enough room at the inn, the simple truth is that being in a village means we are within seconds of countryside; within minutes of isolation from the rigors of modern life and even if we cannot see it out of our front doors or back windows we know it is just a few metres farther.

Of course, this is not an argument that can be put by the few against the needs of the many, those many poor homeless souls waiting to grab the much-needed houses that could be built if only we would shut our selfish mouths.

Let us look at the three parties concerned. The landowners who want to sell, the people who potentially want to buy and those in the village who want it simply to go away. We will not talk about the builders who will perform this act of desecration, as builders have no other motive but to defecate their bricks and mortar over virgin land then move on to the next or their wide-eyed expectation of vast profits lead them into bankruptcy as many find themselves.

Firstly, the landowners, I believe there is a mixture. There are farmers who want to sell agricultural land, private landowners who have some spare land and there is the county council who also want to sell agricultural land.

It's strange that farmers want to sell land to people who are not farmers, who to them are urban dwellers and who if they venture onto their land, would normally be treated with slightly more hostility than they show to badgers, foxes, rabbits or any living thing they cannot profit from. Ah! but there is the rub, they will accept the urban sprawl that will encroach on them in order to make more money from the land than supermarkets will give to them for their produce. Even growing rapeseed bio-fuel does not bring enough cash to satiate their lust for more Range Rovers. Farmers should know better than to sell the very thing that their livelihood depends on... very short-term thinking to be sure.

Secondly, the private landowners. To me it is beyond belief that someone actually living in Gnosall would want to in-fill with more houses. Surely Gnosallers/Gnosallites themselves should not perform this act of self-harm. Are they that desperate for money that they sacrifice their heritage for a quick profit? - shame on them.

Lastly, the county council who we entrusted to protect us from the very thing they are attempting to do. Councils, like governments, are there to protect rampant exploitation of resources that is owned by the people. Sadly all too often our elected peers believe that once in office they can do what they want with things they do not own, they are thieves behind our backs while facing us with democracy.

Britain has a long history (e.g. National Trust) of keeping land which has outstanding beauty, WHY, because we recognise that it is to be cherished.

The rich and the nobility, have acres of land preserved for their selves, WHY, because they recognise that it is to be cherished.

Everyone, who has a garden, would love it to be larger, WHY, because they recognise that it is to be cherished.

The landscape is an asset, just as much as a house. It is Gnosall's jewel and should be recognised and it should be cherished.

Like all good 'who done it's' there is always a culprit, a perpetrator that is only revealed in the last scene when all are gathered together in one room to witness the sleuth's logical conclusion. So, who really is to blame?... Is it all of the above?

Is it the butler?, Miss Scarlet, in the dining room with an axe or is it Professor Green in the lounge with a knife? No, it is not so entertaining; the simple answer is that if they approve any of the developments then the villain is, most certainly, the Stafford Borough Council's Planning.

History does not give me any confidence they will come to the right decision... the Committee whose notion of 'planning' includes knocking down the ancient town walls of Stafford (equivalent to the walls of Chester), to make way for the Queensway bypass in the nineteen sixties... To allow the use of the Ancient High House as a gas showroom for years until it was made into a museum. Even worse, is not to encourage any businesses into the town. Closer to home, to allow the building of houses right in front of Gnosall St Lawrence Parish Church instead of the land being used as a village green which would have been central to the village.

Why is it actually called the 'Planning' committee, they do not plan, they do not look to the future and they do not see the damage they will do to the concept of the 'Village'?